



Environmental Laboratory Advisory Committee (ELAC) Final Meeting Minutes: December 9, 2004

Editorial Note: Information communicated in these minutes is not to be used as official New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection policy or as an official Department notification. Contact NJDEP officials directly for official information regarding matters communicated in these minutes.

Administrative Business

Chairperson Phil Worby (QC Labs) called the meeting to order at 9:45 AM. Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) requested corrections be made to the PT program section regarding the department's auditing policy in the November meeting minutes. Vinny Makfinsky (JMEUC) made a motion to approve the November minutes with these changes and Terrie McIntyre (Merck) seconded the motion.

Subcommittee Reports

Laboratory Certification Program: Rachel Werner (NJDEP-OQA) announced that there was a slowdown in training and auditing requiring travel outside the state because the department needs to reapply to obtain a blanket travel authorization.

PT program: Rachel Werner (NJDEP-OQA) informed the committee that the WW-PT samples should be in the labs by this date. Labs that did not order their samples correctly must go directly to the vendor for replacements and then inform the department. She is not able to purchase any replacement PT samples.

Ms. Werner reported that the new PT contract is still in process and should be awarded by January 2005. Ms. Werner states that this contract is more specific and has wording to make the PT vendor responsible for breakage, submitting VHS studies and guaranteed ship dates.

Ms. Werner indicated that the cost of PT samples would be going up. The PT providers, currently under contract are charging 2nd year prices for the 3rd year of the contract. The contract had been extended for a 4th year at these prices.

Ms. Werner reported that the soil studies closed last week. The department is enforcing these results. If a lab has failed both studies they will be given a 6 month suspension. The OQA will be sending a letter notifying the lab of a pending suspension and allowing the lab an opportunity to explain the failures. Dependent on the conclusions of this communication a suspension letter may be issued by Enforcement.

NELAC/INELA Update: Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) states that NELAC / INELA have consecutive meetings during the conference "Forum on Laboratory Accreditation" scheduled from January 29th through February 4, 2005. Dr. Miller encourages attendance at this local meeting. He recommends the free seminar for first time attendees. Dr. Miller states that there should be discussions on the impacts upon NELAC when the administrative portion of NELAC is self-sufficient. The INELA website has a schedule of events. Phil Worby (QC Labs) states that there will be a seminar on establishing a data integrity plan. There is also a

seminar on how to build a quality manual to meet NELAC requirements. The training courses are held before the meetings on Saturday and Sunday, Jan 29-30.

Dr. Miller handed out the FoPT lists that will be required testing for New Jersey NELAC labs effective June 1st, 2005. Tables may be downloaded from the NELAC website.

NJQL's: Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) states that some labs would be testing the NJQL database on December 14th, 2004. Beta testing on the NJQL database should begin in January 2005.

Bioassay: No report

By-Laws: No report

Sludge (Biosolids): Phil Worby (QC Labs) reports that the sludge committee is active. There has been discussion on defining the treatment and analysis of a sludge sample as an aqueous or solid matrix based on total solids content. There has also been discussion on the definition of holding time beginning with the time the last sample of a composite is taken. Detection limits will also be discussed.

Communications and OQA Website: No report

Old Business

Bureau of Safe Drinking Water: Miss Heather Carson (BSDW) introduced herself to the ELAC committee. She is working under Diane Pupa performing data entry duties and working with the "Lead in Schools" project.

PWTA: Mr. Barker Hamill (Acting Assistant Director -Water Supply Operations) attended the meeting at Phil Worby's (QC Labs) request to address the concerns of the ELAC committee about the new proposed PWTA forms that require laboratories to state that a positive Total Coliform with a negative Fecal Coliform is not a primary failure and that the water is safe to drink. Mr. Hamill states that the state is trying to apply regulations meant for public water systems to private wells and he recognizes that this is difficult. He stated that the first initial testing with a positive Total Coliform and negative Fecal Coliform is inconclusive and that the real groundwater quality issues occur when there is both a positive Total Coliform and Fecal Coliform test. He stated that he is not completely aware of what the health departments are telling their people to do when a positive Total Coliform with a negative Fecal Coliform is reported. He stated that he has asked Pat Bono to draft a set of guidelines to address this issue.

Sharon Ercoliani (GSL) stated that the PWTA law is really information for the homeowners. Many health departments will not allow homeowners to close on a house until the problem is resolved. The current regulations are based on the Total Coliform test. Margaret Ellis (JR Henderson Labs) stated that her customers are told the water is not acceptable to drink with any positive Total Coliform test result.

Barker Hamill stated that the positive Total Coliform test with a negative Fecal Coliform can often be corrected and can be caused by construction and plumbing problems. He is concerned that the positive Total Coliform with a negative Fecal Coliform results are sending a conflicting message on the quality of the ground water in New Jersey. He stated that the PWTA program does not test regularly but they may in the future.

Barker Hamill stated that they have spent 10 years working on this data management system. The system should be ready for pilot labs to test the system in early 2005. He states the focus should be on data entry and not rule explanation.

Phil Worby asked if there was a time-line for Pat Bono to draft the set of guidelines. Mr. Hamill indicated that these should be complete possibly by the end of January 2005. Sharon Ercoliani (GSL) asked if there would be a meeting with ELAC after the draft is completed. Mr. Hamill replied that a subset of labs from ELAC should attend the meeting when the guidelines are discussed.

Sharon Ercoliani explained that the problem that concerns the ELAC committee is that labs that obtain a positive Total Coliform test with a negative Fecal Coliform do not need to tell their customers that there is a problem. Madhuri Dave (STL) says the forms state that the water is safe to use and she thinks laboratories should not be reporting that information. She reported that the July 20th PWTA bulletin advisory states that there is no problem when this data result occurs.

Barker Hamill commented on the requirement for any sites that were tested under the Public Water Supply System for lead that obtained a result > 15 ppb to be retested. He suggested that a form be created for a customer to sign if the customer declines to participate in the retesting under the Pb/Cu program.

Site Remediation: No Report

New Business

Oil and Grease – Deadline for the use of Freon: Margaret Ellis (JR Henderson Labs) asked if the deadline for Freon use remains at the end of December 2005. Dr. Miller (NJDEP-OQA) stated that December 2005 is the proposed deadline but that it has not been finalized. Carol Conklin (OCUA) asked what procedure should be followed to switch from use of EPA 413.1 to EPA 1664A if Freon extractables for Oil and Grease testing are written into a STP permit. She stated that comparison studies have been done but no response was received from the first notification to the Bureau of Permits. Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) suggested sending a certified letter to the Bureau of Permits notifying them of the change in test method.

Dr. Mike Miller stated that the blanket use of SGT-HEM (EPA 1664A) for Petroleum Hydrocarbons (EPA 418.1) is not acceptable because of the loss of the volatile fraction. He stated you may need two analyses to test samples for total petroleum hydrocarbon content. Madhuri Dave (STL) states that site remediation will allow SGT-HEM (EPA 1664A) as a replacement for EPA 418.1. Dr. Miller says that is not true for the Water Program.

Nominations for 2005-2006 ELAC Chairperson: Henni Krawtschenko (East Windsor MUA) was nominated by Vince Makfinsky (JMEUC) for chairperson but she was unable to accept due to other obligations. Madhuri Dave (STL) was nominated by Carol Conklin (OCUA) but she was unable to accept due to other obligations. Sharon Ercoliani (GSL) nominated Harvey Klein (GSL) and Terri McIntyre (Merck) seconded the nomination. Harvey Klein has accepted the nomination for the 2005-2006 ELAC Chairperson.

There were not any other new issues. The meeting adjourned at 11:13 AM.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9:30AM on January 13, 2005 – 4th Floor Conference Room.

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